

SUNDAY 27 JULY 2014

WHENEVER I am talking to my Theology class of 11<sup>th</sup> grade Juniors about the call to Religious Life or the Priesthood I use these two parables : the Treasure in the Field and the Pearl of Great Price. For me they say it all. We've just heard them read but I'm going to repeat them to you — both of them. It is Jesus at his best and at his most concise. Almost only two sentences for each parable:

The Kingdom of God is like a man digging a field who comes across a treasure. He re-buries it, goes off, sells all that he has and buys the field.

The Kingdom of God is like a dealer in Pearls who comes across a huge pearl; sells all that he has and buys it.

I love the part in the first parable where he digs, finds, REBURIES, and then sells ALL and buys it. It suggests that he doesn't want anyone else to get the treasure before he has sold all he has and has the money to buy it.

I tell my class that hearing the Gospel of God's love, hearing the amazing Truth that God loves me, tiny me, in this vast universe, enough in Jesus to die for me so that he and I may enjoy each other FOR EVER — having heard and, through the Holy Spirit, having BELIEVED this message — everything else in the world, all the mind-boggling beauty, even the beauty of married life and family, seem trivial in comparison. My call to give myself totally to God in a spousal kind of love and to spread the message

of his love to those who have not yet heard of it or understood it. What an AMAZING call! And what is this GOSPEL?

What IS this message? It has only dawned on me in all its amazing fullness during the last few years:

God  
has  
an  
exclusive  
love  
for  
each  
person  
he  
creates.

And, as I have mentioned before, this truth contained in the belief that Jesus died so that each person from Adam and Eve to the last person on the planet when Jesus comes again — each person is invited to respond to the EXCLUSIVE love that Jesus has for each. And invited to share in the life of the Trinity for ever.

This is our Gospel

This is our message. This is the joy that, through the Holy Spirit we are mandated by our baptism to bring to those on our world who have not yet heard it —some 5 billion of the 7 billion who currently, so they tell me, inhabit our planet. And thereby bring them joy!

